

Veterans Business Outreach Centers

If you're a service-disabled veteran interested in starting or growing your own business, the U.S. Small Business Administration's Veterans Business Outreach Program is designed to help you do just that.

Established in 1999, the program features business training, counseling, technical assistance and mentoring for service-disabled veterans who are already business owners or who want to become business owners.

The SBA and its partners, such as banks, Service Corps of Retired Executives counselors and business information centers, provide service on a one-to-one basis or to groups of 10 or less, depending on the disabled veterans' capabilities. If you cannot participate in group activities, you may receive individualized service. Those participating in the groups also will receive individualized attention.

Eligibility

If you receive disability compensation under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or you would receive disability compensation if you didn't receive military retired pay, you may be eligible for help from one of the program's veterans business outreach centers. Veterans who have been discharged or released from active-duty military service because of a service-connected disability are also eligible.

To verify eligibility, you may be required to submit a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs stating your percentage of disability and what monetary disability compensation you receive.

Program Elements

The program is divided into six stages, including:

- Pre-business plan workshops
- Concept assessments
- Business plan preparation
- Comprehensive feasibility analysis
- Entrepreneurial training and counseling
- Mentoring

Pre-Business Plan Workshops

Outreach centers and SBA partners hold entrepreneurial development workshops featuring presentations and discussions covering all aspects of self-employment. You will work with a counselor to complete an individual entrepreneurial development plan. The plan outlines training you need and includes recommendations to be completed before you advance to the next stage. Training segments on Internet marketing average four hours per week, including individual counseling and technical assistance.

Concept Assessment

You and a VBOC counselor will assess what entrepreneurial skills need improving. Then counselors will help you tailor an individual entrepreneurial development plan to fit your situation and enhance chances for financial success, market development and long-term sustainability.

Business Plan Preparation

You and your VBOC counselor will develop and maintain a five-year business plan that defines the legal form of business and lists equipment requirements and cost, organizational structure, a strategic plan, market analysis and a financial plan. Each financial plan includes a financial projection, budget projection, and financial/funding requirements. Counselors will also help you find financing or sponsorship for your business.

Comprehensive Feasibility Analysis

The VBOC staff will help you prepare a complete overview of your business venture and will identify its strengths and weaknesses to revise the business plan before it is implemented.

Entrepreneurial Training and Counseling

VBOCs and SBA partners will inform you of entrepreneurial training programs and counseling sessions specifically aimed at service-disabled veterans. SCORE counselors and local small business development centers have experience helping veterans with legal, financial, management, marketing, technology, international trade and government contracting questions. The SBDC Program, an SBA-sponsored, nationwide counseling and training operation, can provide long-term management assistance.

Mentorship

The VBOC conducts individual, on-site visits with veterans, where appropriate. Counselors observe the business activities to see that your business plan is being followed. They also review your business's monthly financial statements to determine whether your plan is producing the projected results or requires revision.

Using the SBA's Veterans Business Outreach Program to help start or expand your business will make achieving success much easier. We're sure we can help you, so why not give us a call?

Where is the nearest Veterans Business Outreach Center?

Region Covered: Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico

Veterans Business Outreach Center
The University of Texas - Pan American
West University Drive
Edinburg, TX 78539-2999

Point of Contact
Candie Roxas
Telephone: 1-877-820-7492
Fax: 1-956-316-2610
E-mail: vboc@panam.edu
Web site: www.coserve1.panam.edu/vboc

Region Covered: Virginia, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia

TEP Consulting, Inc.
858 Dogwood Court, Suite 245
Herndon, VA 20172-0245

Timothy E. Proctor
Telephone: 1-888-588-4891
Fax: 1-703-707-0985
E-mail: timproctor@tepconsulting.com
Web site: www.tepconsulting.com

Region Covered: Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky

The University of West Florida in Pensacola
GCCC/SBDC/VBOC
2500 Minnesota Avenue
Lynn Haven, FL 32444

Angela Partin
Telephone: 1-800-542-7232
Fax: 1-850-271-1109
E-mail: vboc@knology.net
Web site: www.gc.cc.fl.us/vboc

Region Covered: New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands

The Research Foundation
of the State University of New York
1400 Washington Avenue, AD216
Albany, NY 12222

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For More Information

- SBA offices are located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam. For the office nearest you, look under “U.S. Government” in your telephone directory, or contact:
- Phone: 1-800 U ASK SBA
- E-mail: answerdesk@sba.gov
- Fax: 202-205-7064
- TDD: 704-344-6640
- OnLine Electronic Bulletin Board (modem and computer required)
 - 1-800-697-4636 (limited access)
 - 1-900-463-4636 (full access)
 - 202-401-9600 (Washington, D.C., metro area)
- Internet
 - SBA Home page: www.sba.gov
 - Gopher: gopher.sba.gov
 - Telnet: telnet.sba.gov
 - U.S. Business Advisor: www.business.gov
- Your rights to regulatory fairness: 1-888-REG-FAIR

Inquire at your local SBA office for the location of the following resources:

- BICs - Business Information Centers
- TBICs - Tribal Business Information Centers
- OSCSs - One Stop Capital Shops
- SCORE - Service Corps of Retired Executives
- SBDCs - Small Business Development Centers
- USEACs - U.S. Export Assistance Centers
- WBCs - Women's Business Centers

Publications

- The Facts About ... SBA Publications - a listing of free SBA publications

Did you know that in fiscal 1999 the SBA -

- maintained a guaranteed loan portfolio of more than \$40.5 billion in loans to 486,000 small businesses that otherwise would not have had such access to capital?
- backed nearly 49,000 loans totaling a record \$12.5 billion to America's small businesses?
- made 3,100 investments worth \$4.2 billion through its venture capital program?
- provided more than 36,000 loans totaling over \$936 million to disaster victims for residential, personal-property and business losses?
- extended management and technical assistance to more than 900,000 small business persons through its 11,500 Service Corps of Retired Executives volunteers and 1,000 small business development center locations?
- created HUBZones providing federal contracting assistance to small businesses located in "historically underutilized business zones"?

Did you know that America's 24 million small businesses -

- employ more than 52 percent of the private work force?
- generate more than 51 percent of the nation's gross domestic product?
- are the principal source of new jobs?

All of the SBA's programs and services are provided to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis.